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Written statement* submitted by the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty - Association Internationale Pour La Defense de la Liberte, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES: "DIALOG FIVE" - DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (IADRL / AIDLR), Bern Switzerland

I. INTRODUCTION

On the issue of human rights and religious freedom, nothing of a political nature happens by accident.

UNESCO recently confirmed the importance of IADRL's perspective by stating: "the creation of an environment of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, one which guarantees the full enjoyment of the freedom of conscience and religion, requires that all concerned actors and stakeholders work together closely".[1] Thanks to UNESCO; its vision should be fundamental for all people.

Who are these actors and stakeholders?

The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty by its Secretary General Attorney Liviu Olteanu draws attention to human rights, religious freedom and religious minorities by proposing synergy between a network of relevant stakeholders in the platform our organization has named DIALOG FIVE: 'Government – Diplomatic – Religious – Academic – NGOs/Civil Society' representatives; they must participate in multidisciplinary interaction to construct an efficient and effective understanding between civilizations, cultures and religions.

IADRL gained international expertise in 1946, the time of our founder Dr. Jean Nussbaum and of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt- the first IADRL president of the honorary committee. Later, this expertize was developed through the guidance of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Paul Henry Spaak, Rene Cassin, Edgar Faure, Leopold Sedar Senghor and Mary Robinson- the following presidents of honorary committee.

The framework of 'Dialog five' discusses how international, regional and national institutions can effectively work together, which would activate mechanisms to raise awareness of authorities, religious leaders, diplomats, educators and general population on the need of tolerance and acceptance of Other' differences and the respect of religious freedom for all people.

How can religious freedom and religious minorities be protected in this diverse world with trends, attitudes and contrasts?

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon suggested: 'the best form of protection is prevention. The prevention saves lives as well as resources. Prevention is not a one-off affair. Human rights are an essential component of human protection"[2]. A strategy of prevention is consolidated through a holistic approach.

II. A HOLISITIC FRAMEWORK - "DIALOG FIVE"

The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, as a permanent representative to the UN and EP, representative to the COE and OSCE, organizer and attendee of conferences at Governmental, Parliamentary and

[1] Letter of UNESCO from 22 January 2014 sent to Liviu Olteanu Secretary General of IADRL
[2] UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, see at:
http://www.un.org/sg/selected speeches/statement_full.asp?statID=1064

University levels, evaluated the different models of protecting religious liberty and proposes a model that can be referenced by other national and international organizations.

The IADRL willing to test experimental conclusions, initiated[3] a 'Human Rights and Religious Liberty Project' with a holistic approach. Dr. Bruno Vertallier, the president of the organization, correctly noted: "freedom of conscience and of religion hangs today in a fragile balance". That is why this project established a precise structure of different actors and stakeholders representing: Institutional and Multidisciplinary Frameworks.

- On an Institutional level, there is a need of a special approach that includes international, regional and national actors; UN, COE, EU (EP), ECtHR, OSCE, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Different actors can look to the same issue from different angles and consistency, using a different language and prototype that does have a holistic approach.

- Further, this multidisciplinary interaction with different stakeholders must embody the five different categories of representatives: Government –Diplomatic – Religious – Academic – NGOs/Civil Society.

Madrid International Conference

To demonstrate the efficiency of the holistic approach, IADRL initiated a new paradigm' project. The IADRL and Human Rights Institute of University Complutense of Madrid, organized the International Conference hosted in Madrid at the Law Faculty on January 17, 2014. The theme was: "In the Light of Edict of Millan, Religious Freedom and Religious Minorities in the World: New Balance or New Challenges?" Professor Jose Miguel Serrano Ruiz-Calderon is important researcher and contributed as co-director of the Conference along with Liviu Olteanu. We thank to Spanish Government for the contribution of Ricardo Garcia of the Ministry of Justice and Ambassador Belen Alfaro of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to Law Faculty Dean Raul Canosa. The project joined a multidisciplinary network of experts representing the: governmental, academic, diplomatic, religious and NGOs/civil society field as part of national, regional and international actors.

The main guests were: professor Heiner Bielefeldt Special Rapporteur of UN on Freedom of Religion and Belief and Ms. Rita Izsak Independent Expert of UN on Minority Issues. They stressed to the 200 participants present on January 17, 2014 at the University, and on January 18, to around one thousand people participating in the Religious Liberty Concert: "Ambassadors of Liberty, Hope and Peace", on the close relationship which there is between 'religious freedom and religious minorities' and the need of its protection in entire world. To the International Conference has contributed also other important international guests[4].

The topic of the panels were:

- Challenges and trends, which globally affects religious minorities.
- Relation between religion freedom and religious minorities.
- How to promote multidisciplinary dialogue and to sustain the work of UN Special Rapporteur and Independent Expert.
- Protection of religious minorities and prevention of the discrimination against them.

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[3]As important mentors: professor Jose Iturmendi Honorary Dean and professor Juan Antonio Martinez Munoz; also had un instrumental role: UAE Jesus Calvo-president UAE, Corrado Cozzi-director, Alberto Guaita-president ADLR, Mercedez Hamed, Pedro Torres, Conchi Carasco.

[4]Ambassador Alexey Koshemyakov-Council of Europe, Dr. Harri Kuhalampi-European Parliament, Fatos Araci-ECtHR, professor Ganoune Diop-UN Relations New York, Dr. Bruno Vertallier-president IADRL, Dr. John Graz-Secretary General IRLA, professor Jeremy Gunn. Also have participated or contributed the professors:, Alberto de la Hera, dean Jose Maria Espinar, dean Jaime Rossel, Joaquin Mantecon, Zoila Combalia, Javier Martinez Torron, Jose Luis Andavert, Ryay Tatari Islam, Alberto Benasuly Judaism, Jose Luis Andavert president FEREDE.

At the conclusion of the Conference the Special Rapporteur of UN on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt rightly expressed:

III. WHY IS SO IMPORTANT THIS MODEL OF HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK INITIATED BY IADRL?

Heiner Bielefeld's observations:

1. "I attach great importance to the design of Madrid Conference for the systematic consideration to have 'five' different actors, different institutions' presence but also at various levels of Human Rights Institutions".

2. "We have human rights obligations at different levels: national, regional and international and religious beliefs and human rights develop in different directions and can mutually undermine each other. We have the Council of Europe approach, the EU approach, various national approaches, the UN approach…Still I think as a matter of fact these different institutions sometimes are worlds of their own"."We need coordination: one purpose is to avoid a mutual undermining of the authority of human rights standards and for that reason we have to know one another better, to be aware of what's happening, so from my perspective now working in the UN, it is very important to see what's happening in the Council of Europe, in the EU, in different countries..."

3. "The structure of Madrid Conference was demonstrating how to avoid damage, risky situations or a loss of authority because one institution could be played off against other institutions; but of course there is also the positive opportunity to learn from one another, this is the task of cross "fertilization".

4. "We do need these exchanges in order to know from one another's activities to mutually support and reinforce one another's rather than possibly undermine it without even knowing what we are doing".

5. "The Madrid Conference really sets an example, this is something we have to do, is really something we should copy, it is a good and useful· we should establish that on a regular basis in fact.

6. "The project of IADRL needs developing a consistence holistic framework at various levels, institutions and elements of infrastructure to fit together."

IV. PLANS: INTERNATIONAL PRIZE & INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS "AMBASSADORS OF LIBERTY, HOPE AND PEACE"

International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty plans to organize and promote each year (1), or periodically (2):

1. INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AWARD

2. INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONGRES: "Ambassadors of Liberty, Hope and Peace".

The International Religious Freedom Congress will take place in the spring of 2015 and IADRL plans to be hosted in Geneva at UN on the time of 28th Session of HRC-

V. IADRL RECOMANDATIONS

1. We ask for the support and co-sponsorship of UN delegations and other international, regional and national actors on INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS. We inform more on it at the 27th HRC Session.

2. Asks UN delegations sending us proposals for nominating candidates for "International Prize/Award" of IADRL.

3. Proposes to the UN HRC and to UN delegations and other actors:

a. To introduce in the UN Agenda of future sessions of HRC, the holistic approach "Dialog five" on religious liberty and religious minorities according to EU/western and Islamic countries.

b. To establish a Multidisciplinary Forum –"Dialog five". The IADRL is open to cooperate with all UN delegations and other regional and national actors.

VI. CONCLUSION

We are not 100% free when or until the Other is detained, condemned and persecuted for his/her conscience, religion or belief or because belongs to one religious minority; and we are doing nothing for it.

Today, there is a big need of references and models; in entire world; from the past or today: i.e. Jesus Christ, Prophet Muhammad, representing the religious sphere; Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr. Jean Nussbaum, René Cassin, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Richard Wurmbrandt, Vaclav Havel, Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan, Dr. Ben Carson, Ban Ki-moon, Heiner Bielefeldt, etc; or UNESCO, Unicef, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, USCIRF, Pew Forum, are some references.

We don't defend one religion, church or belief, but the Principle of religious liberty for ALL people.

Let us be Ambassadors of liberty, hope and peace!